

AIR WAR COLLEGE

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AMERICA'S BASE NETWORK:
CREDIBLE DETERRENCE

by

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Biography

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Abstract

This essay looks at historical US basing strategy in order to understand the geopolitical and economic complexity facing diplomacy of future global defense posture considerations. US overseas basing has generally materialized in three main periods. Turkey is a country that has shared US diplomatic relations during all three periods and maintained a continuous bilateral security arrangement dating back to 1947. Furthermore, Turkey has also been a staunch NATO partner for 65 years defending the volatile southern flank while working to reduce tension between Europe and the Middle East. As globalism has produced hot spots in the Middle East Turkey's geographic location is advantageous to the US. Turkey's infrastructure of ports, roads and airspace are critical for a surge across AORs between EUCOM and CENTCOM. Moreover, Turkey is a growing regional economic and energy sector player. Finally, Turkey maintains a position as a NATO nuclear umbrella country and is a ballistic missile defense partner under the European Phased Adaptive Approach.

Introduction

The Department of Defense regularly reviews its overseas basing policy with respect to mission, relevance, cost and host nation considerations. No other modern concept has had such a revolutionary impact on warfare as the US overseas basing concept. Overseas basing as a subset of the global force posture has totally transformed U.S. thinking about international security and its conduct of global combat. Although America's role in the international security system has remained fairly unchanged from World War II thru today the global force posture is always shifting to ensure success in the national defense strategy and to provide support to friends and allies.¹ Understanding the U.S. history of overseas basing philosophy and applying that to the current defense posture is an important step to understanding Americas current basing strategy, one that is currently most properly described as avoidance.² This paper attempts to offer a military framing of the environment of the country of Turkey by exploring both this historical defense posture narrative and a contemporary geopolitical context. My aim is to create a smart primer for those with an upcoming assignment, deploying in a senior operational role or those involved in studying and creating American policy vis-à-vis Turkey and the area surrounding NATO's southeastern flank.

I begin by examining the historical context of how and why the US established an overseas basing presence. Basing and access have been part of US grand strategy for more than a hundred years. Three main periods, shaped by geopolitics, technology improvements, and two major attacks on American soil have molded the US ability and desire to project military power. Next I describe the historical context and perspective of Turkey with respect to its Ottoman history. In order to fully understand how the Monroe doctrine, Truman Doctrine and Cold War shaped the Mediterranean region its important to understand how Russia and Iran have

historically influenced the area. This long tradition of influence has linked the US and Turkey in a bilateral alliance for nearly 70 years. By most accounts the relationship is characterized as positive in the decade following World War II and divergent for the next sixty years. Although Turkey has not always been the best partner it has taken great pride in defending NATO's southern border for the past 65 years. Due to its own geopolitical influences and globalization Turkey seeks to be the regional actor influencing economic relations and setting NATO policy. Finally, how will Iran's influence to the east of Turkey and Russia's expansion into Crimea, influence in Ukraine and Syria impact Turkey and influence America's strategic nuclear deterrence? This paper explores the impact to U.S. Grand Strategy through the lens of several challenges facing DOD basing, access and future operations along with maintaining credible deterrence.



Thesis

No other modern concept has had such a revolutionary impact on warfare as the US overseas basing concept. Overseas basing as a subset of the global force posture has totally transformed U.S. thinking about international security and its conduct of global combat. Although America's role in the international security system has remained relatively steady from World War II through today the U.S. global force posture has progressed from a large prepositioned force to that of an expeditionary platform focused on limited contingencies. To ensure future success of national defense strategy we must understand the long-term political and geographic complexity that has shaped America's basing strategy. This narrative will be explored by reviewing the historical context of Turkey in conjunction with future US-Turkey defense cooperation possibilities.

Part I - Basing History

US Basing– 3 Major Phases

Foreign policy experts, specifically those interested in maintaining or adding future basing options, need to ask and attempt to solve the question of where the US is heading. This question cannot be answered without a broad context of the region and understanding the history of how the US interests in the region were gradually defined. There are several characteristics that prevail in all of the different theories that describe the historic evolution of the US overseas basing system. US overseas basing characteristics were shaped as a direct reflection of the geopolitics of the period, the economic nature of the US in relation to the international system and the advancements in military technology. For good reason they continue to define the agenda today.

US overseas basing has been a focal point of the US grand strategy for nearly 120 years dating back to the conclusion of the Spanish American War.³ As such the evolution can be organized into three main periods. The initial period, which contained limited expansion, was a colonial style control similar to that of Great Britain and France. The US was not yet a major world power and the basing remained relatively regionally developed. There were limited global ideology struggles as Great Britain and France consisted of large empires and very few small independent nations existed to challenge them militarily. The geopolitical influence of the US mainly revolved around naval access for symbolic purposes. US aid in the form of military or economic support, which would be major characteristic of later periods, did not yet exist.⁴ At this point the entire US military overseas presence could easily be described as traditional navy

basing. Army units were typically stationed at the major hubs and the air facilities that existed were designed to support the Navy and sea transportation.⁵

The second period of US overseas basing came at the end of World War II. The US entered the Great War with only about 100 bases; by the end of the war it operated more than 2,000.⁶ From 1945 until 1949 the number of overseas bases dropped due to demobilization. This decreasing trend was reversed in 1949, however, with the lead up to the Korean War. The renewed expansion in overseas bases was primarily based on the bipolar containment theory that existed until the end of the Cold War. As described by Representative Hunter the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee: the US global force posture was defined after World War II and the borders were created because of the international security system.⁷ It was primarily concentrated in two areas, the Far East and in Europe.⁸ These two areas of expansion were also shaped by an inter service competition between the US Navy and the newly formed US Air Force. The Navy was focused on the Far East but the Air Force was focused on Europe.⁹ This competition was created because of the expanding US global military network being built on the US foreign policy strategy known as the “four pillars”.

The four pillars would be refined in the decade following World War II and become set in stone by the end of the Korean War in 1953. Geopolitics, military advancements and global economics drove the debates. The policy consisted of first-strike nuclear weapons, which had over 1,500 US overseas installations dedicated to its use. The second pillar was to build a set of alliances to contain communism. The by product of which was the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization. The third pillar was to show US commitment and resolve around the world and the fourth pillar was to promote international economic system based on trade that was led by the US.¹⁰ This global US military presence

served to strengthen alliances and protect US economic interests forming a path to deter the Soviet Union. The US reached peak basing in the very late 1950s with relatively little basing expansion after 1960.¹¹

The third period of US overseas basing was formed as a result of the ending of the Cold War. In 1990, due to numerous advances in technology, including longer-range aircraft and satellite communications and commercial shipping supplementing the need for naval hubs, the US overseas basing structure consisted of approximately 700 overseas bases in 24 countries. Although this number was far fewer than at its peak it would be reduced by a third by 1994.¹² This reduction of overseas bases and troops was primarily in Europe and marked the second occasion in which the US disengaged from continent, the other major European reduction occurring after World War I.¹³ Both eras saw decades of instability and warfare replace the economic stability provided by the US and its global force posture.

The conclusion of the Cold War obviously removed a large existential threat to the US and its allies. Although the reduction in overseas basing was significant it was mostly an in place reduction with the primary overseas basing locations still concentrated in Northern Europe and Asia.¹⁴ It would take the September 11 terrorist attack on the US mainland and the resulting challenges faced in executing the Global War on Terror to force a major global force posture review. The primary restructuring was intended to promote access and positioning in this new era of global interconnectedness. As Under Secretary for Defense for Policy explained to congress in 2004, "The goal is to update posture to allow greater flexibility of forces for deployments and rapid capabilities anywhere they are needed in the world. We want to lighten our footprint and enrich ties with partners to increase cooperation eliminate irritations and modernize the armed forces."¹⁵ The major theme that emerged was focused on projecting power

into theaters that did not have troops based in them. The US is still performing this restructuring today and is slowly transitioning and consolidating US bases into fewer nations.

One example of this consolidation was the 2014 European Infrastructure Consolidation (EIC) process. Fifteen sites were returned to their host nations in Germany, United Kingdom, Belgium, The Netherlands, and Italy. This process of removing the least needed bases is shaped by the threats in the region, reducing redundancy, technology and innovation. Although the US footprint in Europe is being reduced with the EIC the goal is to create greater efficiency to respond to crisis and maintain US infrastructure in support of allies and NATO partners.¹⁶

Part II - The Republic of Turkey

Why Turkey?

Turkey is a useful country to study the evolution of the US modern basing strategy for several reasons. First, the US-Turkey diplomatic relationship dates back to 1831.¹⁷ At that time Turkey was known as the Ottoman Empire, a major Islamic state, and the center of a long history of regional instability. This constant instability has forced Turkey to constantly review its security in order to preserve its basic identity as a nation, as shaped by its geography. Examining the case of Turkey will provide insight across all three periods of US overseas basing exposing issues in the diplomacy of basing rights. Second, because Turkey has a long tumultuous past with Russia and Iran it makes a good case to study the effects of historical global force posture vis-a-vis regional nuclear deterrence by an ally. Third, the domestic political landscapes are changing around the globe. This global rules based international order is under pressure and governing and cooperation are increasingly becoming more challenging.¹⁸

Turkey, a key US ally perfectly positioned between the Middle East and Europe, should continue to share defense, economic and globalized trade interests with the US for the foreseeable future. However, Turkey will continue to view its traditional security as that of promoting economic cooperation with its adjacent partners in the region. As such it will continue to pursue an independent course to gain prominence in the new international security architecture, but within the framework of the NATO security alliance.¹⁹ This international security challenge could have profound ramifications on the US politics of basing and access in the region.

Turkey History

The history of Turkey dates back thousands of years. From 1299 to 1923 the area was known as the Ottoman Empire. During most of this period Turkey was a dominant world power and at its pinnacle included land in Africa, Europe, the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Syria and portions of the Caucasus. Its primary geopolitical rivals that remain active today were Russia to its north and the Persian Empire to its east. This great power rivalry between Russia, Persia and Turkey eventually conflicted with Great Britain's desire to protect its lines of communication through the eastern Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf.²⁰ Due to the long history of Russian influence in Turkey and the growing influence of Britain in Near East affairs Turkey fought a nationalist war of independence. In 1923 the Republic of Turkey was formed as dictated by two key geopolitical elements: geography and relationships with its neighbors.²¹

In the aftermath of World War II Britain's might was declining and was forced to turn to the US to help protect its oil interests and communication avenues in the Middle East. The Soviet Union was expanding its influence into the area and sought to control the Dardanelles and

Bosphorus Straits. These are key maritime connections for the Soviet Union to gain access to the Mediterranean from its Black Sea ports. These Soviet desires, just as in previous eras, along with issues in the Persian Corridor allowed the State Department office for Near East and African Affairs to develop a policy. Their eventual success resulted in promoting an argument for the US to step in order to maintain the balance of power in the Middle East.²² In Turkey, this balancing started in the form of a bi-lateral alliance. This modern alliance of nearly 70 years is still in effect today and is based on shared interests in security and stability. The alliance was formally established via an Economic and Technical agreement of 1947. This cooperation was principally based on the Truman doctrine and its policy “to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”²³

Turkey and NATO

Turkey joined NATO in 1952. It was not a founding member but was added in the first expansion, along with Greece. This act solidified the US-Turkey bi-lateral alliance and served as a formal collective security agreement that binds all the NATO members to collectively oppose aggression against any of the members. For Turkey, the decision to join NATO was the foundation for its defense and security during the Cold War.²⁴ For the US, Turkey was part of the coalition built to pursue forward basing, prepositioning and access to deter and contain the former Soviet Union. The structure in Turkey was designed for conventional as well as nuclear warfare. Turkey’s impact and influence in NATO can be viewed in three phases and each phase has had significant impact to the US overseas defense posture in Turkey.

In the first phase, lasting from alliance entry to completion of the Cold War, Turkey leveraged its land defense capability as an instrument of national power. When Turkey joined

NATO it had a large and respected standing Army. Hence, contrary to the model in Western Europe the US did not station land combat troops in Turkey, only advisors. During this period Turkey strayed very little from US and NATO policy with its Turkey-Greece relationship being the exception. During the 1950's strategic access in Turkey was relatively easy and the US had little trouble establishing overseas basing agreements with Turkey. Due to its critical location along the Black Sea the US built a number of bases in Turkey, growing to over 30 at its peak.²⁵ The bases were primarily designed for forward deterrence in the forms of intelligence, surveillance and communications in order to detect Soviet missile tests and troop movements.²⁶ As the US introduced nuclear weapons into Europe in 1954 they were later installed in Turkey in 1957. These Jupiter IRBMs were deployed under US custody but were later removed in 1963 as a stipulation for the Soviets removing their nuclear missiles from Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis.²⁷

In the mid to late 1970's Turkey bases remained integral to the US for Soviet missile test monitoring and detection as part of the initial Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty between the US and Soviets.²⁸ Primarily because the Soviet Union was viewed as a major security threat to Turkey rather than a potential partner allowed the US to endure a relative complicated defense relationship.²⁹ Although the strained relations had little impact on NATO and US basing access up to this point due to Turkey's willingness to track western ideals it would attempt to challenge America's role in the Middle East. One such major occurrence became prominent in 1974 when it invaded Cyprus with US supplied hardware.

The US subsequently placed an arms embargo on Turkey and this had a long-term detrimental impact on Turkish military readiness and the Turkish economy. It also altered Turkey's view of solely depending on the US for military procurement. Turkey responded by

terminating all US base contracts and refused to sign new ones resulting in all US troops being removed from Turkey. The exception being NATO specific functions were allowed to remain.³⁰ However, in 1979 after the revolution in Iran, Turkey once again grew in regional importance for US base planners. With the loss of Cyprus, Turkey and now Iran the US had extremely limited base access to project military force in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The US would again attempt to gain access, develop support agreements and improve US basing, however it would be limited to NATO related missions.

The US-Turkey bilateral alliance was restored with the 1980 Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement. The bilateral agreement bundled basing rights in a broad contract that tried to enhance security cooperation in the form of military aid to stimulate the Turkish economy with economic assistance.³¹ A 1982 review of the DECA by the US General Accounting Office indicates the agreement was successful in gaining US access back to a pre-embargo state,³² however, the agreement was a compromise that still continues to impact US basing in Turkey to this day. The agreement was broad in nature and in order to stimulate economic growth quickly, left out specifics to allow low-level business to be accomplished without Ministry level coordination. This has had a tactical impact of making friendship difficult, if not impossible. For example the 1982 GAO report addresses issues with construction delays awaiting approval, Turkish labor disputes, and differences in the interpretation of the agreed documents. All of these still occur 35 years later and continue to contribute to major tension with US units at Incirlik AB and NATO units deploying in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.³³

The second major period for NATO started at the end of the Cold War and lasted until September 2001. Due to the large change in European security the strategic vision of NATO

changed from collective defense to collective security. When compared to the bi-polar threat of the Cold War the importance of Turkey became less obvious to Europeans for their security. For the US, however, Turkey rose in regional prominence on two occasions. First in 1991 Turkey joined the coalition contributing to the first Gulf War and again in 1997 for its role in Operation Northern Watch. The 1991 operation marked a new era of US basing in Turkey, as it was the first time US basing contributed to regional security on Turkey's immediate borders.³⁴ Even though these operations helped reinforce Turkey's importance, as described previously Congress decreased overseas basing support dramatically after the Cold War. For Turkey this emerged as US Foreign Military Financing grants being changed to loans in 1993 and then loans being phased out completely by 1997.³⁵

After September 2001 the third phase of NATO emerged. Although struggling at times to find a dominating grand strategy a new borderless collective defense emerged. This new alliance strategy is based on securing the increasing global partnerships and the trans-boundary aspects that threaten these global ties. Turkey's role can be described as a pursuit of regional soft power. Furthermore, significant changes to its political system and a rise in Islamic oriented parties like the Justice and Development Party had major impact to US basing access. This rapid change to Turkey's parliament rather than anti-Americanism was the reason Turkey voted to deny the US northern access for the 2003 Operation Iraqi Freedom.³⁶

During this period Turkey has adapted to the new security environment resulting in unparalleled cooperation on trade and energy with Russia. As such Turkey desires to take the lead in developing its regional grand strategy in the Europe-Middle East region and is engaging more with NATO in an attempt to steer and guide NATO's objectives.³⁷ This is almost a role reversal from its contribution to NATO that played out in phase one.³⁸ This reversal is proving

to be a challenge for Turkey as it learns how to take advantage of its military advancement and economic growth without breeding dislike with Russia or Iran.

Turkey's National Security Strategy

Turkey's role in globalization, NATO's prioritization and Turkey's political, economic and social identity have evolved to shape Turkey's national security objectives. Turkey has three main national objectives focused on security and self-defense.³⁹ The first objective is to preserve the identity of the nation. As such there is a domestic desire by some political elite to return to the glory and prestige of a previous era. Second, Turkey wants to protect its borders both from Kurdish separatists and from the multinational threat on its borders. Finally Turkey wants to grow in regional prominence and deter regional actors while doing so without conflict.

Part III – An Argument for US presence in Turkey

Geopolitics

Due to its complex geostrategic environment, Turkey faces threats in all directions and in all domains. It is challenged by Russia, Iran, terrorism and internal political change. It's also challenged in the air, sea, land, and cyber domains. Therefore US military presence in Turkey is needed now more than ever. The long term US commitment to the peace and security of Turkey extends well beyond that of its NATO obligations. Turkey is a vital security interest and key strategic location for continued projection of US power to guard against the rising threat to the global commons.

One such strategic interest served by US military presence in Turkey is to deter the resurging Russian threat to the regional balance of power. Russian nationalism is again on the rise and the 2015 shoot down of a Russian jet in Syria by a Turkish F-16 operating out of Incirlik AB only added fuel to the fire. Although questions remain as to the motives of recent Russian military modernization, there is no doubt Russia is embarking on a major operation to attempt to weaken and divide NATO. Russia currently has advanced air defenses encircling Turkey in Crimea, Armenia, Syria and the Eastern Mediterranean all of which are working to drastically alter the balance of power in the region.

Another area served by increasing US military presence would be to help provide credibility and stability to the evolving Turkish military. The Turkish military has a history of unifying the country when the democracy become too unstable or it pursued harmful agendas. The military intervened in 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997 by removing the political government in order to steer it back to the secular principles established in 1923. This allowed the military to function with autonomy and independence.⁴⁰ Increasingly, however, the military's historical position of an independent secular entity has been under pressure. The slow transfer to civilian oversight is underway. Jim Zanotti, in a 2011 report for Congress, described three factors contributing to this weakening of the military. The first factor is the economic and political empowerment of the Islamic middle class. Second, the Islamic-leaning Justice and Development Party (AKP) won a parliamentary majority in 2002 and then enacted legislation to strengthen the civilian leadership. Finally, there have been failed attempts by elements in the military, the judiciary branch and Republican People's Party (CHP) to thwart the AKP on key power building issues.⁴¹

The current movement starting in 2002 with the rise of the AKP has led to an authoritarian style of rule that threatens to dismantle democracy in Turkey. This is very concerning for the US since Turkey has generally been considered to be the model western style majority-Muslim country. When the Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923 it was created to emulate a western democracy. It was a major shift that was primarily based on moving away from the Ottoman past by removing elements of Islamic religion to create a secular society. For example the new republic adopted Latin instead of Arabic and changed law codes to emulate European law.⁴² As mentioned above, Turkey has experienced several previous populist and Islamic activism movements that were quelled by military intervention. In the most recent attempted coup d'état on July 15, 2016, however, the military was not successful. The Erdogan government used the coup to enact emergency powers allowing the purge of tens of thousands of civil servants and military. The ruling AKP party has also jailed the leadership of the third largest parliament party, a pro Kurdish political party, and is in the process of trying to change the constitution. Perhaps the biggest concern is what could change in Turkey's foreign policy or NATO alliance if the Erdogan government moves even further from an authoritarian rule into a dictatorship. As Kendall-Taylor and Franz point out a dictator style government tends to produce the most volatile and aggressive foreign policy and help proliferate the most problematic regimes.⁴³

The competition between Turkey and Iran is one such area where this aggressive foreign policy shift of Turkey would be of major concern to NATO. The deepening sectarian conflict in Iraq and Syria has potential to inflame the Sunni and Shiite conflict. This is most certainly the modern struggle of the centuries old mistrust between ancient Persia and the Ottoman Empire. Turkey's involvement, although partially focused on preventing the Kurds from gaining more

territory, is in response to the perception that Iran is encroaching on its historic sphere of influence in Syria and northern Iraq. Iran conversely interprets Turkey's participation in Syria as attempting to regain Ottoman style ambitions and has publicly blamed Turkey for providing logistics and economic support to the jihadists.⁴⁴ This type of mistrust and clashing by proxy could very easily tip the balance in the region.

Turkey's growing pursuit of regional primacy, combined with the President Erdogan led anti-western populist movement is adding to the perception in Europe that Turkey is only concerned with itself. This movement is creating a wedge between Turkey and NATO. Although Europe was slow to criticize Turkey for shooting down a Russian airplane on the Turkey-Syria border, due to the impending Syrian refugee agreement, it was especially critical of President Erdogan after his crackdown of the 2016 coup. Germany in particular has begun to exercise its diplomatic muscle to create new avenues allowing for Turkish media and liberal institutions safe haven in Germany. This is one example of how western democracies are seeking ways to reverse the growing authoritarian problem in Turkey.⁴⁵ The ability of Turkey to remain relevant in NATO is most likely at an inflection point. One where Turkey needs to ensure NATO that it has the alliance interests at heart even when pursuing its own regional strategic goals.

Economics

One such area Turkey could reassure NATO is by reversing course on its growing defense industry, trade and military relationships. Although Russia threatens Turkey geopolitically it has been successful in normalizing economic ties with Turkey. In October 2016, both countries agreed to a \$12.5 billion natural gas deal with the promise of future cooperation.⁴⁶

Although these regional economic relationships for resources and tourism make sense any discussion of defense and space procurement would threaten to further erode the western economic underpinnings of Turkish power. A great start to reverse the trend is the recent agreement on 28 January 2017 between the United Kingdom and Turkey to collaborate on building a fifth generation fighter for Turkey.⁴⁷ This does slightly erode the US security influence over Turkey, however, it does so in a multilateral partnership that will serve NATO security and interdependence ultimately helping the US led global economic order.

Turkey has harbored desire for great power status and regional hegemony partly due to its AKP policy of more independence. Because Turkey is facing numerous multidimensional threats in the fight against terror and is seeking ways to reduce the Kurdish separatist movement it has opened economic talks with Iran. Although Turkey and Iran are on opposite sides of the Syrian conflict they view the Kurdish separatist movement through the same lens. If Turkey opens new trade deals with Iran, it has the potential to create more unease in the Middle East. Iran has a history of supporting terrorism, human rights violations and has had an agenda to destabilize the Middle East. Because of this history the US has left in place sanctions that prohibit firms from relying on the dollar to do business in Iran. Therefore any trade between Turkey and Iran won't be transacted in US dollars. This would ultimately limit the US' ability to impose future financial sanctions on Iran.⁴⁸ A large trade deal between Turkey and Iran would also add to the perception that US and Turkey defense priorities are diverging.

While US domestic constituencies are increasingly wary of Turkish domestic policy, the concerns must be outweighed by larger considerations of revitalizing economic growth bilaterally in order to strengthen US global interests in the region. The US should be willing and

able to rethink economic cooperation with Turkey and actually promote cooperation in the form of economic collaboration to help Turkey with its indigenous military technology procurement.

Although trade between the US and Turkey has increased over the past decade it still remains lower than its potential. A larger bilateral military trade agreement would serve to enhance specific geopolitical security and would tackle several challenges for both countries. It would serve to enhance and expand the US global trading links. It would return Turkey to the US security umbrella allowing Turkey to focus on border defense, combating terrorism and give it time to develop indigenous defense procurement sector.

Military Cooperation

Although political turmoil within Turkey has reduced the military's influence and Turkish public debate sounds more like Turkey is diverging from US defense priorities there are several reasons to be optimistic. Several NATO and US operations reflect not only shared interests but also increased cooperation at the operational level. Turkey is heavily involved in NATO's Baltic air policing mission and the Anatolian Eagle exercises typically held at Konya Air Base are back as of 2015. Another successful shared operation is Nomad Shadow. A 2013 Atlantic Council article states that the US shares MQ-1 footage with Turkish intelligence to allow the military to pursue terrorist PKK rebels on border with Iraq. The article further states, "[Nomad Shadow] has enabled the Turkish military to carry out more-limited, precise counterterrorism operations instead of sending large numbers of troops into northern Iraq."⁴⁹ This type of successful military cooperation forged the way for US and coalition operations at Incirlik AB in support Operation Inherent Resolve. Incirlik AB has hosted U.S. Air Force F-16, F-15, A-10, KC-135, C-130, and UAV aircraft, and numerous NATO and Gulf nation aircraft.

A second area where Turkish and the US interests are aligned is at strategic level where two key NATO deterrence missions are hosted on Turkish soil. Turkey plays a key role in both ballistic missile defense (BMD) and the NATO nuclear umbrella. As part of the European Phased Adaptive Approach Turkey hosts a key radar site in support of the layered system. Turkey is also one of five locations across Europe, along with Belgium, Germany, Italy and The Netherlands that host tactical nuclear weapons. These tactical weapons provide regional stability, deterrence and most likely keep Turkey from seeking its own nuclear capability.

Conclusion

The US has been very successful in attaining its global unipolar status and much of it can be attributed to the vast overseas basing network. The three phases of US basing have helped Turkey to improve and mutually enhance security in the Mediterranean and Middle East. Even so the progress towards increasing Turkey's presence in the global economy has been slow but with the right approach can still trend positive. The problem arises when Turkey starts to resent the US for meddling in its affairs and aims to challenge some aspects of the US military and economic power in order to enhance its own soft power in the region.

Although we always think of Turkey as not allowing the US military access for OIF we need to continue to maintain and pursue better access. Gen Wald, former deputy commander of U.S. European Command, argues that the US needs to walk away from Incirlik AB. Moreover, he states that opening a base in Kurdish territory in Iraq could serve similar geographic advantages in lieu of Incirlik AB.⁵⁰ Although this would produce a very short-term carrot vis-a-vis Turkey, it would result in losing strategic command and control systems as well as key multimodal ports that allow the US to resupply the entire CENTCOM AOR extremely quickly.

The more the US can promote and maintain favorable access to Turkey's airspace, rail and ports the more success we will have in future execution of US military power.

Democracies in an alliance share common ideals but don't always agree with each other. The current Turkish elite movement that is rooted in historical nationalism and inward-looking regional development will dissipate with time. The greater threat is the undermining of the US lead economic order on Turkey's border by Russia and Iran. This makes the expansion of deeper economic partnership between the US and Turkey as important as any time in the previous 70 years. The problem can be addressed by finding innovative ways to promote western ideals including capitalism and global trade providing a basis for continued long term partnership between the US and Turkey.

Confronted with the current government in Turkey the US has two options. First, the US could disengage. This would ultimately reduce US deterrence to Russian ambition in the Mediterranean and would also significantly reduce the DODs immediate crisis response ability. Second the US could stand by its ally in this time of change and seek a stronger more secure presence. Factoring such conditions US Senator John McCain, in his January 2017 article, *Return to Power*, challenged the US to expand overseas basing: "Given growing anti-access and area denial challenges across multiple theaters, many of our longstanding assumptions about force posture are being called into question. We require more permanently forward-stationed forces".⁵¹ The continuation and expansion of enduring US military presence in Turkey is exactly what is needed to reverse the growing perception that the US is losing influence in the region.

NOTES

- ¹ Congress, *Revisions to the U.S. Global Defense Footprint*, 66.
- ² Gillem, *America Town*, 263.
- ³ Mills et al., *A Cost Analysis of the U.S. Air Force Overseas Posture*, iii.
- ⁴ Harkavy, *Great Power Competition for Overseas Bases*, 88.
- ⁵ Blaker, *United States Overseas Basing*, 10.
- ⁶ Ibid., 21.
- ⁷ Congress, *Revisions to the U.S. Global Defense Footprint*, 65.
- ⁸ Harkavy, *Great Power Competition for Overseas Bases*, 144.
- ⁹ Ma, *Farms, Firms, and Runways*, 49.
- ¹⁰ Gerson and Birchard, *The Sun Never Sets--*, 11–13.
- ¹¹ Harkavy, *Great Power Competition for Overseas Bases*, 153.
- ¹² Clarke and O'Connor, "U.S. Base-Rights Payments after the Cold War," 442.
- ¹³ Coffey, "The Future of US Bases in Europe," 142.
- ¹⁴ Congress, *Revisions to the U.S. Global Defense Footprint*, 116.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 116
- ¹⁶ "DoD Announces European Infrastructure Consolidation Actions and F-35 B."
- ¹⁷ "Turkey." State department website
- ¹⁸ National Intelligence Council (U.S.), *Global Trends*, 6.
- ¹⁹ "Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs."
- ²⁰ Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, 4.
- ²¹ "Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs."
- ²² Harkavy, *Great Power Competition for Overseas Bases*, 5.
- ²³ "Turkey."
- ²⁴ "Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs."
- ²⁵ Zanotti, "Turkey-U.S. Defense Cooperation: Prospects and Challenges," 38.
- ²⁶ Harkavy, *Great Power Competition for Overseas Bases*, 150.
- ²⁷ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 220–21.
- ²⁸ Harkavy, *Great Power Competition for Overseas Bases*, 1.
- ²⁹ Cooley and Nexon, "The Empire Will Compensate You," 1039.
- ³⁰ Zanotti, "Turkey-U.S. Defense Cooperation: Prospects and Challenges," 2.

³¹ Cooley and Nexon, “The Empire Will Compensate You,” 1037.

³² “The Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement--U.S. Interests and Turkish Needs,”
ii.

³³ This is the opinion of the author. I spent two years at Incirlik, May 2014 – May 2016, as the 39th Operational Support Squadron CC. As such, I participated in the planning and execution of Operation Inherent Resolve. My experience with the DECA comes from working with ODC-Turkey, EUCOM J-5, and the Turkish General Military Staff.

³⁴ Cooley, *Base Politics*, 128.

³⁵ Zanotti, “Turkey-U.S. Defense Cooperation: Prospects and Challenges,” 40.

³⁶ Cooley, *Base Politics*, 131–34.

³⁷ Zanotti, “Turkey-U.S. Defense Cooperation: Prospects and Challenges,” 14.

³⁸ Gülnur, “Turkey’s Security Challenges and NATO.”

³⁹ “Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs.”

⁴⁰ Tol and Taspinar, “Erdogan’s Turn to the Kemalists.”

⁴¹ Zanotti, “Turkey-U.S. Defense Cooperation: Prospects and Challenges,” 11.

⁴² Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Turkey*, 1996, XXV.

⁴³ Kendall-Taylor and Frantz, “How Democracies Fall Apart.”

⁴⁴ Vaez, “Turkey and Iran’s Dangerous Collision Course.”

⁴⁵ Thomas, “Turkish Opposition Finds Base in Germany.”

⁴⁶ Bekdil, “Turkey’s Difficult Détente With Russia.”

⁴⁷ Herschelman, “Turkey and UK Agree to Develop New Fighter Aircraft.”

⁴⁸ Bashir and Lorber, “Unfreezing Iran.”

⁴⁹ Whitlock, “Report.”

⁵⁰ Charles Wald, Wald, “Get Ready to Walk Away from Incirlik.”

⁵¹ McCain, “Restoring American Power.”

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